

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Western District of North Carolina

FILED
ASHEVILLE, N.C.

MAY 03 2017

U.S. DISTRICT COURT
W. DIST. OF N.C.

United States of America)

v.)

JOHN PATRICK PRICE)

Case No. 1:17-mj-70

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of April 4 & April 27, 2017 in the county of Rutherford in the
Western District of North Carolina, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

Offense Description

18 USC, Section 875(c)

Transmitting threatening communications affecting interstate commerce

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

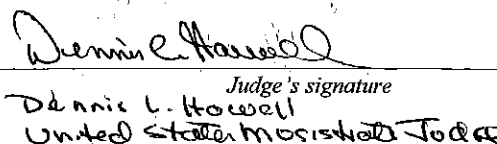
☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

Complainant's signature

Special Agent James A. Anderson

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date: 05/03/2017City and state: Asheville, North Carolina

Judge's signature

Dennis L. Howell
United States Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

Western District of North Carolina

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF CRIMINAL COMPLAINT AND ARREST WARRANT

I, James A. Anderson, being duly sworn, do hereby state as follows:

INTRODUCTION AND AGENT BACKGROUND

1. I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and have been so employed since July 20, 1997. I am currently assigned to the Asheville Resident Agency of the Charlotte field office.

2. As a Special Agent, I am a law enforcement officer of the United States as defined by Section 2510(7) of Title 18, United States Code (U.S.C.), that is, an officer of the United States who is empowered by law to conduct investigations of and make arrests for offenses enumerated in Section 2516 of Title 18, U.S.C. As a Special Agent, I have conducted and participated in a variety of criminal and national security investigations, including investigations associated with counterterrorism, foreign counterintelligence, murder, gang violence, bank robberies, fugitives, financial crimes, computer crimes, as well as other violent criminal acts.

3. This Affidavit is being submitted in support of a criminal complaint and an arrest warrant for JOHN PATRICK PRICE, also known as (aka) Molly Howard, hereafter referred to as PRICE, for the violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 875(c).

4. I am aware of information contained in this Affidavit through direct participation in this investigation and information provided to me by other law enforcement officers and witnesses. Since this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of securing a criminal

complaint and an arrest warrant, I have not included each and every fact known to me concerning this investigation. I have set forth only the facts I believe are necessary to support the issuance of a criminal complaint and an arrest warrant for PRICE.

FACTS SUPPORTING PROBABLE CAUSE

5. On April 28, 2017, an individual who wished to remain anonymous (hereafter referred to as "complainant"), telephonically contacted the FBI via the agency's Public Access Line to report that JOHN PATRICK PRICE (PRICE) had been asserting threatening statements through an internet messaging platform, and that PRICE was set to conduct some type of mass killing in Forest City, NC. Complainant stated that approximately two months ago, PRICE had been discussing "how easy it would be to kill a bunch of people" via the internet messaging platform "Steam." On April 4, 2017, PRICE sent complainant a text message via an online messaging platform, stating, "I am training to do a very bad thing. How high of a count will satisfy you to kill." The comment ended with a "happy face" and "ha ha." The complainant also sent the FBI a cut-and-paste transcript of a text messaging conversation between the complainant and PRICE that occurred on April 27, 2017. What follows are excerpts of that text messaging conversation, all of which were sent by PRICE (using the screen name "Fruitwalker") to the complainant (complainant's responses are omitted):

- Do you have any idea how easy it would be to kill 50+ people in a killing spree in Forest City
- I think 50 is a lowball
- The infrastructure the police have in this city by the time they realize what's going on you'd be damn tired from killing people

- You don't want all the people in one place
- That's how you get caught easy
- Trust me I've studied it pretty in depth LOL
- You wanna be able to get people who live in the middle of nowhere + have isolated daycares
- That with only having 4 cops on shift on Tuesdays & Thursdays? LOL
- & 1 broadcast repeater? Shiiet
- There's 3 daycares with only 2 women who work there
- That's 20 – 30 kids alone lmao
- & that's a lowball
- Kill the women with a knife = no noise/commotion finish kids off. Go do next one. Start out in sunshine/middle of nowhere killing people in isolated houses
- Bruh ppl underestimate how easy it would be
- I've taken so much time planning
- You think Cho planned well? Elliot? LOL no
- Those guys went out on a whim

6. "Cho" appears to be a reference to Seung-Hui Cho, the person responsible for the Virginia Tech mass shooting on April 16, 2007 that resulted in the deaths of 32 people and injuries to seventeen. "Elliot" is believed to be a reference to Elliot Rodger, the person responsible for the Isla Vista mass shooting on May 23, 2014 that resulted in the deaths of six people and injuries to fourteen near the campus of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

7. Complainant advised that approximately five years ago, PRICE told his family he was a transgender and changed his name to Molly. Complainant advised that several years ago, PRICE was in the military for a few months, had a mental breakdown, attempted suicide, and was admitted to a mental hospital.

8. On April 28, 2017, in response to the information complainant provided, Special Agent James A. Anderson (Affiant) and a Forest City Police Department (FCPD) officer approached and interviewed PRICE at the SUBJECT PREMISES. PRICE stated that he is an "online gamer" and utilizes Google Voice to communicate over the Internet. PRICE stated his Google Voice screenname is Runhuskyrun87@gmail.com, attached to the Google Voice cellular telephone number 828/919-2445. PRICE uses Google Voice to connect to and communicate through the messaging platform "Steam." PRICE stated that he is working and/or playing on his computer 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Affiant asked PRICE if he had made any recent comments that anyone could have interpreted as threatening, to which he responded "absolutely not." Writer then asked PRICE if she had specifically made any recent comments via Steam that anyone could have interpreted as threatening, to which PRICE responded "no." PRICE then stated that he is constantly online, constantly messaging, and therefore any number of folks might wrongly interpret some of his comments as threatening. Affiant asked PRICE to elaborate and give an example of the types of comments that someone might wrongly interpret as threatening, to which PRICE stated, "I can't remember any right now." Writer then paraphrased the following statements to PRICE (excerpts provided by complainant via the April 28, 2017 Public Access Line call), and asked if he asserted such statements: "I am training to do a very bad thing;" "It would be very easy to kill a lot of people;" "How high of a count will satisfy you to kill;" and, "I could go into a day care with approximately thirty women and children, and stab

them with a knife. I would kill the women first, then the children. I could go Bostic, and other surrounding towns outside Forest City.” PRICE denied making any of those threatening comments.

9. At that point in the interview, Affiant asked if investigating agents could accompany PRICE to his computer while he (PRICE) voluntarily pulled-up his messaging platforms to review. PRICE agreed, turned on his computer, and accessed his Google Voice – the only text messaging program he claimed to have recently used. PRICE allowed investigating agents to watch as he accessed saved messaging conversations over the past month. Affiant asked PRICE to access his messaging that occurred on April 4, 2017. PRICE did so, and investigating agents observed messages sent via the Steam platform, including: “I’m training to do a very bad thing :) I’m going to need a lot of endurance. ha ha.” The time/date stamp for that statement was “April 4, 6:25 PM.” PRICE admitted that he (PRICE) typed and submitted that statement. PRICE claimed that he was just kidding and was referring to a game. PRICE stated he in no way was alluding to actually committing some type of violent act. PRICE did not show the investigating agents any other threatening statements.

10. At the conclusion of the interview, PRICE again denied making any threatening comments about stabbing, hurting, or killing anybody. PRICE stated that he owns no weaponry of any kind, nor does he have access to any guns or explosives.

11. On May 2, 2017, complainant reported to the FBI that PRICE has become a very angry and disturbed person as a result of being ridiculed for his homosexuality and his transgender status. Complainant advised that over the past five years, PRICE has had ongoing mental health issues, has sought and received counseling, and has routinely been prescribed

mental health medications. Complainant advised that at some point in recent years, mental health physicians diagnosed PRICE with schizophrenia. Complainant has known that PRICE has made similar threatening statements over time and because PRICE continues to do so, complainant believes PRICE represents a legitimate threat.

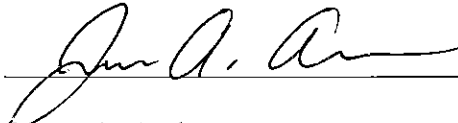
12. During the interview of PRICE on April 28, 2017, PRICE advised that he lives alone in his residence at 117 Jones Street. On April 28, 2017, a driver's license check for PRICE revealed the following data: John Patrick Price, white male, residing at 117 Jones Street, Forest City, NC, 28043.

13. The online communication services used by PRICE, including Steam and Google Voice, are interstate services that utilize facilities of interstate commerce.

CONCLUSION

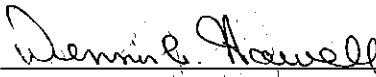
14. Based on my previous investigative experience and the above information, I submit there is probable cause that on April 4, 2017 and April 28, 2017, John Patrick PRICE violated Title 18, United States Code, Section 875(c).

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NOT



James A. Anderson
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

REVIEWED BY ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY DON GAST SUBSCRIBED
and SWORN before me on May 5, 2017.



Dennis L. Howell
United States Magistrate Judge
Western District of North Carolina